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G. W. ROBERTS, Agent,  
O. R. & N. Dock.**Swift Vengeance.**

Traveling in New Mexico, I stopped one evening in a hamlet. A number of desperadoes had ridden into the town and were in possession of the saloon, from which came a chorus of yells.

I was sitting on the veranda of the tavern when I saw a young Mexican man and woman go by. The man was good looking, and the girl was a beauty. Though I could not understand the Spanish lingo they talked, it was plain they were lovers. They separated almost in front of the tavern, not scrupling to embrace at parting nor caring that any one saw them in each other's arms, apparently oblivious to all except themselves.

Ten minutes later the young man was passing the saloon when several of the brawlers came out roaring drunk, brandishing revolvers.

"You say you can beat me shootin'?" yelled one to another. "I'll show you what I can do." And, aiming at the young Mexican, he fired. The boy sank down on the ground with a moan.

I heard a shriek and, looking toward a house the girl had entered, saw her staggering toward her lover. But she made only a few steps when she sank down in a swoon. Her mother came out and carried her back to the house. Several people put their heads out of their doors and windows and, seeing the young man lying on the ground, gathered round him and carried him into the nearest dwelling, where he died in a few minutes.

It was the shock of my life. I burned to see swift retribution meted out to the murderer, but there were only a few peaceable Mexicans in the town, and I knew it was impossible. I would gladly have left the place at once, but there was no conveyance except my horse, and I did not care to risk a journey at night alone.

I sat during the evening on the tavern veranda, endeavoring to quiet my indignation with tobacco. There was a half moon in the sky. The air was balmy, and perfect quiet reigned. The people of the town were all indoors. The desperadoes had drunk so hard that they were all doubtless in a stupor. At any rate, they made no noise, and they were still in the saloon. I knew I would not sleep if I went to bed, so continued to sit where I was, lighting one cigar from another. At midnight I was still there. The moon was blood red, just above the horizon and gave no light. There was a flaring lamp on a post in front of the saloon, which partly illumined the street.

It was near morning when the men came out of the saloon, a few at a time, and staggered past the tavern to a stable below, where they had put their horses. Presently one went by alone, whom, though the light was dim, I recognized as the murderer. He had scarcely passed the tavern when I saw a figure—I could not tell if it was man or woman—emerge from behind a house opposite and scud along behind him, keeping so far as possible in shadow.

Curiosity got the better of me, and I followed the man and his shadow. The former—I did not see the latter—was drawing near the stable, when I heard a soft voice call:

"Bignor!"  
The man paused and turned. What light there was shone directly on his face. I can see that face now, brutal, bloated, with a background of long tousled hair and a beard falling below his broad brimmed felt hat. He wore a shabby coat over a dark blue woolen shirt. His trousers were tucked in his boots.

Then I caught a glimpse of another figure whom I deemed to be the shadow. The back was toward me, and by the silhouette I knew that it was a woman. I could hear her talking to the man, part in Spanish, part in English, but was not near enough to hear what she said.

Two more men came out of the saloon, and the man and the woman I watched moved into shadow. The men went on past the place where the couple had been standing and entered the stable. By this time the gang began to lead their horses out and were making preparations to mount, some tightening their saddle girths, some looking to articles strapped to their saddles, while others went back to the saloon for a last drink. Half an hour went by before they were all mounted and ready to depart. Then I heard one of them ask:

"All here?"  
A few minutes later a voice said, "Sam is missing."

"Oh, I saw him go off with a gal," said a voice.

"Well, I reckon he'll come when he gets ready."

Then they all rode away.

I waited till the clatter of their horses' hoofs had died away in the distance, then strolled along, taking care to keep in shadow, toward the place where the murderer and the woman had disappeared. I listened, but could hear nothing. I waited, still listening and peering into the darkness. All was still. I entered a lane through which I thought the couple had probably gone. There was nothing but the stars to light the way, and, passing a dark point, I stumbled against something lying on the ground. I turned and, looking down at my stumbling block, saw that it was the shape of a human body. I put my hand down on a man's breast and against something wet. I started to get away, but a desire to fix my suspicion conquered my dread. I struck a match, and it flashed in the ashen face of the murderer.

An hour later I left the place without a word of my find.

F. A. MITCHELL.

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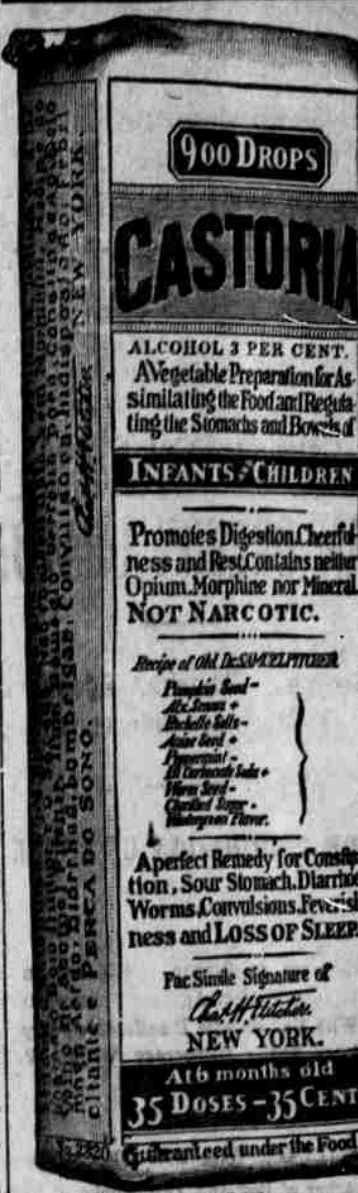
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